

Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 SR-02 ORM-01 IO-10 AGR-05 SWF-01 /077 W

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P 061058Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO CINCPAC PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC 1721

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 8891

CINCPAC FOR AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, SREF, LA

SUBJ: AID TO REFUGEES

REF: VIENTIANE 8890

1. AT SOUPHANOUVONG'S RECEPTION ON DECEMBER 4 AT LUANG PRABANG, THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR PHENG PHONGSAVAN MADE A BEELINE FOR ME AS SOON AS I ENTERED. HE SAID THAT AT THE CABINET MEETING THAT AFTERNOON THE SUBJECT OF REFUGEES HAD ARISEN. HE HAD REPORTED ON THE AMBASSADOR'S LETTER INDICATING THAT "ALL AID TO REFUGEES WOULD BE CUT OFF DECEMBER 1." THE PRIME MINISTER, SAID PHENG, HAD ASKED HIM TO ASK ME TO ASK THE AMBASSADOR THAT THIS DECISION BE RESCINDED AND THAT THIS AID BE EXTENDED THROUGH JUNE 30 (SIC). I SAID THAT THERE MUST BE A FUNDAMENTAL MISUNDERSTANDING. THE HARVEST WAS IN. OVERALL THERE WAS A GOOD CROP THROUGHOUT LAOS, AND AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS WE WERE STOPPING RICE ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES WHO HAD SUFFICIENT FOOD AVAILABLE. WE HAD NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING ANY VILLAGE OR ANY FAMILY TO STARVE AND WE RECOGNIZED THAT DESPITE THE OVERALL GOOD CROP THERE WERE SUCH POCKETS OF

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WANT. I WAS SURPRISED BY HIS INTERPRETATION OF THE

AMBASSADOR'S LETTER, I SAID, SINCE I HAD UNDERSTOOD ALL THIS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT WITH HIS MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE. HOWEVER, I WAS PREPARED TO MEET WITH HIM AT ANY CONVENIENT TIME TO REVIEW THE SITUATION. HE SEEMED APPEASED AND SAID HE WOULD CALL ME FIRST THING NEXT WEEK WHEN HE RETURNED TO VIENTIANE.

2. AFTER THIS ENCOUNTER, I CHATTED WITH A NUMBER OF CABINET MEMBERS TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED A FALSE IMPRESSION OF OUR POSITION. I AM SATISFIED THAT PHENG'S PRESENTATION HAS NOT CREATED A CONCERN AMONG THEM; IN FACT, ONE SAID THAT THE MATTER HAD BEEN RAISED AT THE VERY END OF THE MEETING AND RATHER PERFUNCTORILY.

3. FOR DEPARTMENT: THE LETTER FROM THE AMBASSADOR TO THE MINISTER DATED NOVEMBER 21 DID NOT SAY THAT "ALL AID TO REFUGEES" WOULD BE CUT OFF DECEMBER 1. IT INDICATED THAT THE "NORMAL" HARVEST ADJUSTMENTS IN RICE RATION WOULD BE INSTITUTED DECEMBER 1, BASED ON PRELIMINARY KNOWLEDGE OF RICE HARVEST IN REFUGEE AREAS THROUGHOUT LAOS. IT FURTHER STATED THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE PL 480 FOODS TO SPECIFIC REFUGEE AND INDIGENT GROUPS WHEN IT IS DETERMINED TO BE NEEDED BY OFFICIALS OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN CONSULTATION WITH OFFICIALS OF USAID.
CHAPMAN

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Message Attributes

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